

Fine Arts Faculty

Director John Mixon



John Mixon currently serves as the Director of the Fine Arts Division at Northwest Mississippi Community College, where he is responsible for the Visual Art, Music and Theatre Departments. He has over 30 years of experience as an educator at the middle, high school and community college level. He received his Bachelor and Master of Music Degrees from the University of Mississippi. During his tenure as an instrumental music educator, programs under his leadership received numerous awards at the regional and national levels, including the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences Grammy Signature School Award and Best 100

Communities in America for Music Education.

Mixon has been recognized as Mississippi Band Director of the Year, Teacher of the Year and Star Teacher by the Mississippi Economic Council. He was selected to serve as Concert Director for the Mississippi All State Band and has been featured in School Band and Orchestra Magazine as one of '50 Directors Who Make a Difference'.

Lawayne House



Chair of Art Department Lawayne House grew up in Memphis, Tennessee. In 1976, he graduated from the then-Memphis Academy of Arts with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Advertising Design. Recruited by the greeting card giant, Hallmark Cards, Lawayne moved to Kansas City, Missouri and began his career as a designer. Over the next 25 years he balanced his art pursuits with a successful career in both illustration and advertising. Seeking an opportunity to help young artists pursue professional careers, Lawayne began working for Northwest as an adjunct instructor in 2001. And, in 2002 he entered the graduate program at the Memphis College of Art. In 2004 he was awarded the terminal degree in Studio Art, the Master of Fine Arts degree with an emphasis in painting.

Lawayne began working for Northwest full-time in 2004 and became Chair of the Art Department in 2006. He currently teaches Art Appreciation, Art History, Design and Painting. He is a member of the eLearning Committee and teaches both Art Appreciation and Art History online. As a co-sponsor of the student art club, Les Fauves, he shares in the responsibility of maintaining and coordinating exhibitions held in the Northwest Art Gallery. Through his many creative pursuits, Lawayne has designed numerous illustrations and advertising collateral for a variety of corporate and retail accounts. In his studio, he continues to explore the unlimited possibilities of paint and paper. His work has been exhibited in various venues both local and national exhibitions.

Ashley Chavis



Ashley Kenneth Chavis is originally from southeast Georgia. In 1995, after being awarded an art portfolio scholarship, he enrolled at The Savannah College of Art and Design to study architecture. However, due to the Georgia Hope Scholarship, he decided to transfer. During this time, Ashley fell in love with Ceramics and Fine Art. In 2000, he graduated from Armstrong Atlantic State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Studio Art. He completed graduate school in 2005 at The University of Mississippi and was awarded the terminal degree in Studio Art, the Master of Fine Arts degree, with an emphasis in Ceramics.

Ashley began working for Northwest Mississippi Community College in 2007. He currently teaches Drawing and Ceramics. He also helps curate and maintain the department's art gallery and is an advisor of the students' art club, Les Fauves.

Ashley also enjoys an active studio schedule. Most of his creative energy is devoted to producing functional pottery that has a unique sense of tactility and surface design. However, he also experiments with mixed-media drawings and prints. He has shown his work in over one hundred exhibitions. His work can be found in numerous regional and national exhibitions and locally at Southside Gallery in Oxford, Mississippi. He is a member of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA), Southeastern College Art Conference (SECAC), Southern Graphics Council International (SGCI), and Sycamore Arts Council. Ashley lives with his wife, Virginia, who is also an artist, and two children in Oxford.

Danita Lloyd



Danita Lloyd began her career in 2012 as an instructor at Northwest Mississippi Community College. Originally from Leland, Mississippi, Danita attended Mississippi Delta Community College, a short distance from her home, and received her Associates Degree in Art. Majoring in Graphic Design and Painting, her second and third degrees were awarded at Delta State University in Cleveland Mississippi. For her Master's Degree in Studio Arts, she attended Memphis College of Art and graduated with honors.

Danita is the Graphic Design Instructor at Northwest Mississippi Community College and teaches courses in Computer Arts, Advertising Design, Design I & II and Art Appreciation. Danita's personal artwork concentrates on Painting and Mixed media. Her subjects focus on two areas, local landscapes and text.

Mackey Harrison

Mackey Harrison, Adjunct Art Instructor holds a bachelors degree from Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota, FL and a Master of Fine Arts from The University of Mississippi. He has taught as a graduate student and visiting assistant professor of art for The University of Mississippi and as a gifted art instructor for Tate County School District. With twenty years of teaching experience, Mackey has conducted workshops for The University of Mississippi Museum's after school program and Sycamore Art Council's Art Smart Summer Camp.

Harrison has previously served as Vice President and is currently an active board member of the Sycamore Art Council. His work has been shown in numerous exhibitions and is in the permanent collection of The Masur Museum, Monroe, LA and collection of actor Morgan Freeman.

Music

Susanne Spencer Van Dyke



Susanne Spencer Van Dyke began her teaching career in 1993 as Director of Choral Activities at Northwest Mississippi Community College and also serves as the chair of the Music Department. She is a graduate of South Panola High School. In addition to beginning her college studies at Northwest, she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Delta State University and a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from Mississippi College. She has also taken post graduate courses in choral conducting with Dr. James Jordan at Westminster Choir College. She is featured in "Who's Who Among America's Teachers" and is a contributor to the book "The Musician's Spirit" by Dr. James Jordan. She is past president of the State Community College Choral Association as well a member of American Choral Directors Association and National Association of Teachers of Singing. In 2013, Van Dyke was awarded the prestigious Sandy Grisham Excellence in Teaching Award for her innovation, excellence and commitment in teaching music and in directing choral activities at Northwest Mississippi Community College.

In the past she also served as Vocal Director for NWCC musicals and in this position has directed "Cats", "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat", "Smoke on the Mountain", "Sanders Family Christmas", "Little Shop of Horrors", "Fiddler on the Roof", "Man of La Mancha" and many others. She also served as vocal coach for the community theatre premiere of "Les Miserables" produced by Panola Playhouse.

Jonathan Bass



Guitar instructor Jonathan Bass is a guitarist, bassist, and composer. Bass is a native of Mississippi and holds a Bachelor of Music in Guitar Performance from the University of Southern Mississippi, and a Master of Music degree in Jazz Studies from the University of Memphis.

Bass continued his career in Chicago where he worked as a professional guitarist in a variety of genres eventually forming his own quintet, The Jonathan Bass Quintet. The first album from this ensemble is *Shapes and Colors* (2008). While performing in these groups, Bass also maintained a position as an educator teaching private lessons in the Chicago area.

Currently, Bass lives and performs in the Memphis area.

Sandra Bishop



Sandra Bishop teaches piano and music theory and is the director of the Northwest show choir, The Entertainers. Additionally, she assists with Northwest Singers and is the collaborative pianist for faculty and student recitals. Sandra holds the Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from the University of Alabama and the Master of Music in Piano Performance from Louisiana State University. She earned the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Pedagogy from the University of Mississippi. She also holds a Bachelor of Science in Paralegal Studies from the University of Southern Mississippi. Before joining the faculty of NWCC, she taught general music at Batesville (MS) Elementary School and choral music at Batesville Junior High. Dr. Bishop resides in Oxford and is an active accompanist in that area.

Justin Robinson



Currently serving as the Marching Band Director/Assistant Band Director at Northwest Mississippi Community College in Senatobia, MS. His other duties include recruiting, teaching Music Appreciation, and teaching major and non-major high brass lessons. Justin received his Bachelor of Music Education degree from Mississippi State University in 2011, after which he attended The Pennsylvania State University and received his Master of Music degree focusing on Trumpet Performance in 2013. He taught at Southaven Middle and High School in the DeSoto County School District for one year before receiving his current appointment in the summer of 2014. Outside of teaching at Northwest, Justin is an active performer, clinician, and educator. Justin avidly supports the marching arts and has been involved with groups that have participated in the Drum Corps International World Championships since 2004.

Jeff Triplett



Jeff Triplett is beginning his eighth year as an instructor at Northwest Mississippi Community College. A native of Senatobia, he attended NWCC from 1985-87, receiving his associate of arts degree. He also holds a bachelor's degree in music education from the University of Southern Mississippi and a master's degree in music education from Delta State University.

In addition to his duties assisting with the marching and concert bands, he teaches applied low-brass, and music business.

Jennifer Hodges Whitehead



Will be teaching Music Fundamentals, all Woodwind private lessons, and coaching flute choir, clarinet choir, and saxophone quartet. New to the Northwest Mississippi Community College faculty in Senatobia, Jennifer is an active freelance flutist in Memphis area with a passion for teaching music and woodwind pedagogy.

Jennifer received a BM (flute performance) from the University of Mississippi, where she was extremely active in Sigma Alpha Iota, and earned a MM (flute performance) from the University of Memphis. She is a certified Suzuki and Orff teacher and has a very large private flute studio consisting of students from all over the Mid-South area. Each summer she coordinates the Desoto Flute Camp and the Memphis Flute Camp, and has served on the board of the Mid-South Flute Society as Secretary, Program Coordinator, and Exhibits Chair for the annual Mid-South Flute Festival.

A sought after woodwind adjudicator, both regionally and nationally, Jennifer has judged for Desoto County and the WTSBOA, served as taped round judge for the National Flute Association High School Soloist Competition in 2009, and, in 2011 and 2012, served as taped round for the National Flute Association Flute Choir competition.

Jennifer has performed at Wildacres Flute Retreat, Brevard Music Center, Domain Forget in Quebec, and was selected to perform with the National Wind Ensemble in Carnegie Hall. She regularly performs with the Jackson Symphony Orchestra in Tennessee on both piccolo and flute and performed this past year at the Single Reed Summit at the University of Mississippi.

John Ungurait



Band Director John Ungurait, a native of northern Indiana, begins his 20th year as director of Bands. An alumnus of Northwest, which he attended in 1983 and 1984, Ungurait received a Bachelors degree in music education from the University of Southern Mississippi and a Masters degree in music from New Mexico State University. In 2006, he was president of the Mississippi Community and Junior College Band Directors Association, and served as past president of that organization last year. Known as a clinician and judge in Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona, Ungurait has also worked as a percussion instructor for several drum and bugle corps, and he served as the front ensemble instructor for the Arizona Sun Drum and Bugle Corps. In Mississippi he has worked as a consultant with high school bands in Pascagoula, Lumberton, Hernando, Oxford and Senatobia. He has served as clinician for the Memphis City Schools Honor Band.

London Silas Shavers



London-Silas Shavers is a member of the Fine Arts Faculty at Northwest Mississippi Community College Desoto Center. Shavers is also an Endorsing Clarinet Artist/Clinician for Backun Musical Services, Ltd. and an Endorsing Saxophone Artist/Clinician for P. Mauriat Brand Saxophones. In addition to his teaching, festival adjudication, and ensemble conducting throughout the Greater Memphis area, Shavers performs throughout the United States and abroad as a soloist and chamber musician, and is an active woodwind clinician, recitalist, and composer.

As an ardent proponent of music by living composers, Shavers has participated in multiple commissions of new works and has also premiered works by North American composers David Maslanka, Bill Douglas, and Gary Schocker. Shavers holds degrees from Valparaiso University (B.M.Ed), Western Michigan University (M.M), and has completed advanced graduate studies at the University of Memphis. Shavers has been on Northwest Faculty since 2006 and currently teaches Music Appreciation courses at NWCC Desoto Center.

Speech/Theatre

Bill Maze



Bill Maze is a Speech Instructor in the Division of Fine Arts.

Dr. Maze holds degrees from The University of Memphis (PhD), Mankato State University (MA), and a Bachelors degree from Winona State University.

His primary focus is teaching sections of Public Speaking and Argumentation & Debate. Dr. Maze also fills various committee appointments during the school year.

Sadie S. Shannon



Theatre and Speech Instructor Sadie S. Shannon is originally from Minnesota and has been a member of the Northwest family since 2009. Sadie has a B.A. in Music from William Carey University in Hattiesburg, MS and an M.F.A. in Acting Pedagogy from the University of Alabama. Roll Tide! In addition to teaching Theatre and Speech courses she directs plays for NWCC and is the advisor of the Northwest Players Club.

Some of her favorite acting credits include; The Bakers Wife in Into the Woods, Daisy in Sideshow, Pegeen in Playboy of the Western World, Popeye in The Miss Firecracker Contest, Pooty in Reckless, June in The Sanders Family Christmas. Sadie has presented at conferences such as the Southeastern Theatre Conference as well as been the guest speaker at several Musical Theatre workshops. She is a founding member of the Alabama Graduate Theatre Alliance and a proud member of VASTA.

Tracy Schaffer

Dr. Tracy Schaffer has been teaching a variety of communication classes for the past ten years, including Speech Communication, Organizational Communication, Health Communication, Research Methods, and Conflict Communication. Dr. Schaffer's research interests involve mental health literacy, health narratives, addiction, social support, self-efficacy, and family systems. In April 2014, her dissertation titled "The Experience of the Addiction-Affected Family: A Communication Based Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis" won both the Morton Dissertation Award as well as the Department of Communication Research Award at the University of Memphis. Dr. Schaffer holds a B.A. in Political Science, M.A. in Organizational Communication, and Ph.D. in Health Communication from the University of Memphis.

Alyssa McElfresh



Originally from Yuba City, CA, she is an alumnus of Northwest where she received her Associate of Arts degree in Speech & Theatre. While at Northwest, she was a member of many organizations including: Phi Theta Kappa; Northwest Players Club; Northwest Singers; Northwest Entertainers; & Northwest Chamber Choir. She was also inducted into Northwest's Hall of Fame, Who's Who in Junior Colleges; was listed on both the Dean's & President's lists, and was honored for her leadership skills.

After Northwest, she attended Mississippi University for Women where she completed her Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and maintained her membership in Phi Theta Kappa as well as being nominated (and becoming a member of) The National Society of Leadership.

She is currently pursuing her M.A. in Theatre from Regent University while teaching full time at Northwest as the Technical Director for the Fine Arts.

She has been pursuing theatre since the age of 15 and has participated in over 40 shows in playhouses and theatres from Senatobia, MS to Olympia, WA. She has performed many roles in theatre, onstage (from Demeter in *CATS* to Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) & backstage (Lighting Designer, Scenic Designer, Scenic Artist, Stage Manager, Production Manager, Director).

She will be managing and producing all events held in the Northwest Fine Arts Auditorium as well as instructing the Technical Theatre Classes and participating as a director in Northwest's Theatre season.